

MINUTES

SCTS ESTATES, HEALTH & SAFETY, FIRE AND SECURITY COMMITTEE MEETING: Thursday 25 February 2016, Parliament House, Edinburgh

Members Present:

Sheriff Iona McDonald, Non-Executive Member SCTS Board (Chair)
Sheriff Grant McCulloch, Non-Executive Member SCTS Board
Professor Hugh MacDougall, Non-Executive Member SCTS Board
Aileen Gomes, Non-Executive Member (external)
Donald Wooley, Non-Executive Member (external)

Attended:

Richard Maconachie, Chief Finance Officer, SCTS
David Currie, Director Property & Services, SCTS
Pam McFarlane, Acting Director Operations Delivery, SCTS
Martin Hamilton, Turner & Townsend (Item 1 only)
Margaret Peattie, Secretariat Business Manager, SCTS (Minutes)

Apologies:

Tom Gorman, Non-Executive Member (external)

1. Workshop Session – SCTS Estates Strategy

1.1 Martin Hamilton made a short presentation updating on the development of the SCTS Estates Strategy. Members heard that Turner & Townsend had facilitated a workshop session for the Executive to which Sheriff McDonald and Tom Gorman had been invited. This workshop had re-focused the approach and helped identify key elements of the Strategy. The outcome of this was subject of a report to the Executive and would inform the preparation of a draft Strategy by Turner & Townsend.

1.2 The Executive Team would receive the draft Strategy in April before it was submitted to the Committee for discussion at its next meeting. Members were keen to see and comment on the draft before the meeting in June so that any feedback could be incorporated into the draft Strategy before it came to them for sign off. Once agreed the final draft Estates Strategy would be submitted to the Board for its approval.

1.3 In discussion members agreed that the Strategy should align with the SCTS Corporate Plan. It should include a clear message about resource requirements and the need for investment to ensure that the courts and tribunals estate was fit for purpose. The long term ambition to build more justice centres should also be reiterated within the Strategy and consideration given to how best to utilise available space and the accommodation costs for partner organisations who may wish to have a permanent presence in SCTS buildings.

2. Minutes of the Meeting of 19 November 2015

2.1 The Minutes of the last meeting were approved.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 There were no outstanding actions which would not be discussed elsewhere on the agenda.

3.2 The Minutes from the December and February meetings of the SCTS Board had been circulated along with the papers for today's meeting. The Chair highlighted any matters discussed or decisions made at the Board meeting which had a bearing on estates matters.

4. Review of Risk – Project RAG Report (SCTS/EST/Feb16/01)

4.1 The Committee received the project RAG report noting that, of 44 projects in the portfolio, two were rated red, ten rated amber and the remainder were at green. The Executive reported on the projects rated red and the Committee was satisfied that they were being managed actively and that discussions with third parties were ongoing to resolve matters.

5. Health Safety and Security Assessment – Kirkcaldy (SCTS/Feb16/02)

5.1 The report on the assessment of risk at Kirkcaldy was received by the Committee. The Executive had discussed the report with the Sheriff Principal and with the sheriffs at Kirkcaldy.

5.2 The Committee recognised that the cost of any structural changes to mitigate building design limitations and resolve the issue of congestion at the entrance to the sheriff court would not represent best value investment. Priority should be given to exploring the feasibility of developing a justice centre to replace the sheriff and justice of the peace courts in Kirkcaldy. The Executive would continue to explore funding options for justice centre development as part of the SCTS estates strategy.

5.3 In carrying out the review, the Executive had identified a number of improvements which the Sheriff Principal and sheriffs had agreed should proceed. The Committee **endorsed** the implementation of the improvements and **agreed** that the report be submitted to the SCTS Board.

6. Estates Budget 2015-16 (SCTS/EST/Feb16/03)

6.1 The Finance report was presented for scrutiny. In December the SCTS Board had allocated monies from the Reserve to fund priority estates projects. The Property & Services Unit had also been able to commit expenditure to make progress on reducing backlog maintenance.

6.2 The Executive provided information on the type of maintenance which was not covered by the Facilities Management (FM) contract. Charges were incurred for *ad hoc* works not classed as a repair or rectification of defects and under £500 in value. The FM contract would be re-tendered later this year and consideration would be given to what should be included in the contract or defined as chargeable maintenance as part of that exercise.

7. Justice Centre Update

7.1 The Executive reported that the Scottish Government had allocated funding for the development of a justice centre in Inverness as part of its recent Spending Review. Work to purchase a suitable site was now underway and a project manager had been appointed. The Project Board would be chaired by the Chief Executive and its first meeting would take place on 2 March.

7.2 Project documentation, including a detailed Business Case, was being drafted and would be considered by the Project Board and the Executive Team. The Business Plan would be shared with the Committee for information at its meeting in June before the final draft was submitted to the SCTS Board for approval at its meeting later that month. **It was agreed** that the Committee should receive updates on progress at future meetings.

8. New Business Cases

8.1 No new business cases were presented for consideration at today's meeting.

9. Vulnerable Witness – Remote Sites (SCTS/EST/Feb16/04)

9.1 The Committee received a report on the usage made of the 41 remote sites across Scotland established since 2005 to enable vulnerable witnesses to give evidence to court by means of video conferencing facilities.

9.2 The Victims and Witnesses (Scotland) Act 2015 implemented in the sheriff courts in September 2015 and in the JP courts in December 2015 had widened the scope of vulnerable witnesses and the special measures available when giving evidence. The overall number of applications for special measures had increased significantly, with greater use being made of screens and supporters. To date there had been no increase in applications for the use of court video links or remote sites, albeit the introduction of special measures was still at an early stage.

9.3 The Committee invited the Executive to keep the usage of the remote sites under review and an update would be provided for the September Committee meeting.

10. Update on SG Property Review

10.1 The Executive provided an update on Scottish Government's Smarter Workplace Initiative and the impact this would have on tribunal accommodation in Glasgow. The lease for Europa House would end in December this year and Property & Services was currently considering alternative solutions for accommodating the small number of staff currently located there. An options paper was being prepared and would be shared with the Committee at its June meeting.

11. Any Other Business

Members' visit to Kilmarnock

11.1 Since the last meeting, Aileen Gomes and Donald Wooley had visited Kilmarnock Sheriff Court to see the accommodation there and the types of cases heard on a daily basis. Both reported that they had found this a very worthwhile experience which had given them a real insight into a typical day in a busy court environment.

12. Date of Next Meeting

12.1 The next meeting would be held on Thursday 2 June 2016 in Parliament House.